

BUDGAME

by

Greg Vovos

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CHARACTERS

HAMM: A blind man who sits in a wheelchair. Intensely authoritative, especially when it comes to Clov.

CLOV: He is younger than Hamm and is also his caretaker. While Clov generally submits to Hamm's orders, he has a side to him that can attack with extreme ferocity that often results in humor. He is a character full of contradictions. Though he usually submits, he fights to win, and attacks with his words and diction.

BUD: A young man who floats through time and space. Hamm and Clov keep him in the garbage can.

SETTING

The home of Hamm and Clov. There is a garbage can, a window, and an exit leading to a kitchen.

SYNOPSIS

This is a modern day look into Samuel Beckett's *Endgame*. Bud wants to leave the land of the peeling wallpaper and he hopes to take Clov with him.

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(It is important to note that as this is a "game" in a sense, the director is free to use and create whatever stage directions he/she feels will benefit his/her production. The playwright is mainly concerned that Clov's exit and entrance stage direction lines are followed--beyond that it is up to the actors and the director.)

Lights are dim as Clov stands looking out the window, a bright light shines through it. There is the sound of banging coming from the garbage can that is taped shut. Clov looks at it, wipes it clean with his hand, and the banging continues. Clov kicks it and walks towards Hamm who is sitting centerstage with a sheet covering his body. Lights up in full. Clov begins strangling Hamm, who is hidden by the sheet. Finally, as if hearing a starting gun, Bud breaks out of the garbage can, and Hamm rips the sheet off his face which is actually where his feet should be--so Clov was actually strangling Hamm's feet, not his neck.

HAMM

This is what I call making an entrance.

BUD

You two are going to drive me to a sanitorium.

HAMM

That will be your own doing.

CLOV

You should be thankful if such a thing happens.

BUD

I really will leave.

HAMM

Hear that, Clov? Bud says he's going to leave.

CLOV

(Loudly) Bud say's he's going to leave.

BUD

I'm not afraid.

CLOV

Good for, Bud.

HAMM

I agree. Good for Bud.

BUD

You guys want to come with me?

CLOV

I will.

HAMM

Yes, Clov will.

BUD

Well, come on, Clov.

HAMM

But not until he finishes making dinner.

CLOV

Forget it. I'm leaving. Come on, Bud.

BUD

Okay, see ya, Hamm.

HAMM

Right, see you.

BUD

Come on, Clov.

CLOV

I'm coming.

BUD

I'll prove you wrong, Hamm. You think this is the only world there is--inside these damn walls with the peeling wallpaper. There's lots of world outside these walls.

CLOV

Yes, lots of world.

HAMM

Lots of world. Unfortunately for you the world ends today.

CLOV

I better find my stepladder so I can watch.

Clov exits into the kitchen.

BUD

Stop mocking me. The world is not ending. And once I leave you can be damn sure I'll never return because I'm going to find a new world, a world like anything but this one. And I'll never return. Never.

Clov re-enters and places a stuffed dog next to Hamm.

CLOV

Never.

BUD

Because, I'll find real happiness.

CLOV

March on Conquering Hero!!!

Clov begins pushing Hamm around the room.

HAMM

Yes, march on!

BUD

I'm going.

CLOV

March on!

BUD

Well, come on, Clov!

CLOV

March on!

BUD

Now or never, Clov!

CLOV

Now!

Clov pushes Hamm towards the garbage can and then stops.

We'll have stuffed dog for dinner.

HAMM

I must warn you. You'll be much safer inside these walls when the world does end.

BUD

Why? Either way we will all die.

HAMM

No! Inside these walls we will be protected.

CLOV

Yes, Bud. The world ends everyday, and it's yet to get us.

Long pause.

BUD

Are you sure?

HAMM

Of course he's sure. You don't want to tempt fate.

BUD

Somebody has to. I am the Conquering Hero. So I will fly to all corners of the globe and create everything anew so even if the world does end there is a new one to take its place. What do you think about that?

CLOV

I named the rat in the kitchen Oedipus.

Silence as Bud walks towards the door.

BUD

Well, this is goodbye and you can be damned sure you'll never see me again.

CLOV

March on!

HAMM

Yes, right over the cliff and deep into the abyss.

A silence and then Bud exits.

HAMM

Return me to the center, Clov.

Clov carefully positions Hamm center stage and begins to exit into the kitchen. Hamm moves the wheelchair a bit.

HAMM

This is not the center.

Clov returns and centers Hamm even more carefully than before. He begins to exit and Hamm moves the wheelchair again.

Still not the center.

Clov returns and pushes Hamm upstage and begins to leave.

I do not feel centered, Clov.

Clov repositions him back to the center and locks the breaks on the wheelchair so Hamm can't move it.

Again wrong. Get the tape measure.

CLOV

(Imitating Hamm's voice) Get the tape measure.

Clov exits into the kitchen yelling the line "get the tape measure" over and over. He makes some noise and then becomes silent. After a count of ten he returns wearing hospital pants--not just boxers--and he is carrying a black umbrella and a valise. Just as he quietly sneaks towards the door:

HAMM

Clov! I smell you. Have you the tape measure?

CLOV

Yes, I am leaving.

HAMM

Where will you go, Clov? The world has ended.

CLOV

To find Bud.

HAMM

Who is Bud?

CLOV

I don't know. The child of the plague?

HAMM

I see. Have a good trip.

CLOV

I will. Thank you, Hamm.

Clov puts the sheet over Hamm's face and lies down in front of Hamm. The lights dim and Clov starts making noises in his sleep. Finally, he awakes, walks towards the window, cleans the garbage can quickly, and starts jumping up and down so he can see out the window. Since he's not tall enough he finds the stepladder he went to get earlier. He positions it properly and looks out the window. He sees Bud, who was about to climb through the window, and begins to laugh hysterically. Bud runs away, frightened, and enters through the door located upstage. Clov and Hamm do not move.

BUD

Well, I'm back.

Silence. Bud exits and re-enters.

This is what I call making an entrance.

Bud does something to get their attention—perhaps the moonwalk--and Clov exits into the kitchen.

I was outside...and I'm back...and I am not dead. Clov? I see you almost caught the rat. Clov?

Bud walks over to Hamm and takes the sheet off his face.

Hamm? You were right...Kind of...I made it back...unfortunately...(Calmly) The hippos took over France and made their way into the cherry orchard.

CLOV

Well, you don't have to yell. We can hear you.

HAMM

Who are you talking to, Clov?

CLOV

I'm talking to him.

HAMM

Who?

CLOV

Him.

HAMM

Is it time for my painkiller yet?

CLOV
No.

HAMM
Where's the dog?

BUD
I have a new painkiller for you.

HAMM
I thought you were leaving. What happened?

BUD
I did leave, but I've returned.

HAMM
Hear that, Clov? He says he left and now he's returned.

CLOV
I heard.

BUD
I was outside. Past the horizon.

CLOV
I'm going away.

BUD
No, Clov. I just did. It's not safe. The hippos are everywhere. The world is ending.

HAMM
What color are they?

Clov climbs the stepladder and looks out the window.

BUD
Green.

HAMM
What is wrong with you? What color were they?

CLOV
Outside it's gray. Not black.

HAMM
Oh, so they were gray were they?

Clou steps down from the ladder.

CLOV

I'm going away.

HAMM

Where are you going?

CLOV

Into the kitchen.

Clou exits into the kitchen.

BUD

That's not away. I was away.

Clou enters quickly.

CLOV

(Angrily) You. Were not. Away!

Clou exits into the kitchen.

HAMM

Clou? Clou? Where are you?

BUD

He's right here.

HAMM

He is not. I don't smell him.

BUD

Okay. He went away.

HAMM

You went away.

BUD

You don't believe me?

HAMM

Do you believe you?

BUD

I blinded Oedipus.

HAMM

And I suppose now you can see.

BUD

I can see. You can't.

HAMM

Clov, what are you doing in there?

Clov re-enters and is strangling himself with his belt.

CLOV

I'm working.

HAMM

What kind of work?

CLOV

I'm staring at the stove.

Clov exits back into the kitchen.

HAMM

Everyday is the same thing. When will things take their course?

BUD

I took the course. And I found my mother. Her name's Jocaste.

HAMM

Your grandparents are in the garbage cans.

BUD

Nobody's in there.

HAMM

Wrong.

BUD

I'll prove it to you. I'll pry the lids open.

HAMM

You could do that. But do you really want a repeat of what happened last time?

BUD

I don't care. Except there's a plague in Thebes. There's hippos everywhere.

Clov enters and does a somersault.

CLOV

This is what I call making an entrance!

HAMM

Where's the dog?

CLOV

He's in the stove. Hiding from the hippopotamuses.

BUD

You think I just make these things up? Huh? Well, I'm not. I did blind Oedipus, but I couldn't save Jocaste--my mother--or Thebes for that matter. And Maggie the Cat, well, she--

HAMM

Bring me the dog.

CLOV

He's with the hippos.

BUD

That's right. Everyone outside has turned into hippopotamuses. Or is about to. Except me because I made it back in time.

HAMM

What about Clov? Did he make it back in time?

CLOV

No, I didn't!

Clov starts imitating a hippopotamus.

BUD

Clov did not leave. I left. I left. Clov's afraid to leave. I asked him but he was afraid.

HAMM

Are you going to let him talk about you like that?

CLOV

No.

Clov exits.

HAMM

Give me my painkillers.

BUD

There is no more. I ate them all.

HAMM

When you were outside?

BUD

I don't know why I ever knocked on your door.

HAMM

What are you talking about? You've always been here. Always have been and always will be. I've been outside. Not you.

BUD

I am not from here.

HAMM

Then where are you from?

BUD

The plague is not my fault.

Clov re-enters with valise and umbrella.

CLOV

I'm leaving now. The dog's in the stove in case you get hungry.

HAMM

You won't leave. You'll kill yourself.

CLOV

That's why I'm leaving.

BUD

You won't leave.

CLOV

I am leaving.

HAMM

Bye Clov.

CLOV

I'm not leaving yet.

BUD

When are you leaving?

HAMM

Same time you are.

BUD

Damn! you drive me crazy. Open your eyes for Christ's sake. I left. And I took your painkillers. And the only reason I came back is because of the people--

HAMM

The people?

CLOV

What are you deaf?

HAMM

Well, I guess it's my turn to leave, eh, Clov?

CLOV

Yes.

Clov starts pushing Hamm around the room.

HAMM

Aaaaaah, things sure have changed since the last time I left this house. The Earth seems more ravaged.

CLOV

It's extinguished, not ravaged. It's not ravaged, it's extinguished.

Clov smiles at Bud and begins to whistle and push Hamm quickly downstage. Bud intervenes and saves Hamm just before Clov can push him off the stage.

BUD

Stop it! I told you I left and I did.

HAMM

If you left, Mr. Christopher Columbus, then how could you be here?

BUD

I returned. That's how.

HAMM

You hear that, Clov? He says he left and he's returned.

CLOV

And I said the earth is extinguished though I've never seen it lit.

BUD

And I said I left. And the Earth is not extinguished and in some places it is lit. It's the people. That's the problem.

HAMM

Return me to the center.

CLOV

Let me get the tape measure.

HAMM

Just guesstimate.

Clov does not. He begins to laugh at Hamm. Hamm, frustrated, decides to do it himself.

A little more to the right. No, now to the left. Now back. I want the center. I want the center. I want the center. I want the center. The center.

Every time Hamm says he wants the center, Clov mocks him by laughing and repeating the line "I want the center." Finally, Bud positions him in the center.

BUD

Stop it. You're fine. You're in the center. And I did leave. I should have stayed left. You people are crazy.

HAMM

Are you going to let him talk to you like that, Clov?

CLOV

No.

BUD

I did leave. I can prove it to you. I have Jocaste's brooches.

HAMM

Let me see.

BUD

You can't see.

HAMM

Let me feel.

Bud searches his pockets for the brooches but comes up empty. Bud and Clov begin to attack Bud, trying to get the brooches. Finally, Hamm falls out of his wheelchair.

BUD

Shit. I gave them to Big Daddy for his birthday.

Clov laughs loudly and starts dancing around. As he dances he sings:

CLOV

Brooches to Big Daddy, Brooches to Big Daddy, Bud gave the Brooches to Birthday Boy Big Daddy.

BUD

You're really starting to piss me off.

HAMM

So do something about it!

BUD

I will.

CLOV

What will you do?

BUD

I'll leave.

HAMM

No one leaves here. Outside of here is death.

BUD

So maybe I will leave.

CLOV

No, you won't.

BUD

I will leave. It's about time someone did.

CLOV

Not you.

BUD

Why wouldn't I?

CLOV

Because you won't.

BUD

That's a stupid reason not to leave.

HAMM

Bud's right. That is a stupid reason not to leave. But you won't leave.

BUD

Why not?

HAMM

Because you won't.

BUD

I will leave. And I will find a new home, with new people, where they don't drive me crazy and make me want to pull all the brains out of my skull.

CLOV

Who does that to you?

BUD

You and Hamm.

CLOV

Yeah, Hamm drives me crazy. I'm leaving with you.

HAMM

You won't leave. You always say you will but you never do.

BUD

Well, there's a first time for everything.

HAMM

Not necessarily.

BUD

Come on, Clov. Let's leave.

HAMM

Make sure you take the dog out of the stove before you go.

CLOV

The dog is next to you.

HAMM

You said it's in the stove.

BUD

So just because he said that doesn't make it true.

HAMM

That's true.

Silence.

When are you leaving?

CLOV

Now.

Clov exits into the kitchen.

BUD

I'm sorry I have to leave, Hamm. But it's time I've become a man. Found my own home, maybe even a girl.

HAMM

My heart is in my head.

BUD

I'm sorry to hear that. But I must go now. Are you coming Clov?

CLOV

(From offstage.) Yes.

Bud helps Hamm find the wheelchair by moving it closer to him and putting his hand on the bars, so Hamm can pull himself into the chair, using his arms.

HAMM

You should go. You are young. I have already seen the world as it withers away. But be careful of the rhinoceroses. Everyone's turning into rhinoceroses, or mothers of lost children are hanging themselves, or brothers are blinding brothers by sticking brooches in their eyes, while still others are drinking themselves to death. It's a sick, ugly world out there. Not like here. *(Pause.)* And you won't find a home.

BUD

Here is worse. I need to find the land where the sun never stops shining and the birds fly upside down so no one gets pooped on, and the waters allow us to lie on top of its waves as they roll merrily along, and then I will find my real mother--my real mother--and once I find her I will become champion of the world. Champion, I tell you. Then once I find the highest peak somewhere on the opposite side of the Valley Nile, I will yell to the Gods, and I will send you the good tidings I have found, and if you don't listen then the animals will, and

I will build an arc and invite anyone who wants to come with me--and I will never see this place again--because me and my arc, and my new family and friends, will sail through the skies to a new world where happiness will be ever-present, and the wallpaper never comes off the walls, because there will be no walls!

Silence.

HAMM

Then why will you come back?

BUD

I will not come back and neither will Clov. Come on, Clov.

Clov enters with his umbrella and valise.

CLOV

All set.

BUD

You want to come with us, Hamm?

HAMM

There's no need. Take me around the world, Clov.

Clov begins pushing him around the room.

BUD

I really am leaving.

HAMM

But you'll return.

BUD

No.

HAMM

So he leaves. Hoping for a friend on his journey. But his friends are left behind circling the globe.

Clov stops pushing the wheelchair around.

But the lad does not realize he knows nothing but of the world inside the walls. Whereas the world outside the walls is graying and filling with Rhinos. Meanwhile, the farther he drifts, the more desolate life inside the walls becomes and the older the room grows, longing for hope and companionship only to find garbage cans with their lids nailed shut.

BUD
Come on, Clov. Let's go.

CLOV
Go where?

BUD
To find a new home where the wallpaper stays on the walls.

CLOV
Okay, I'm going.

Clov lies down on the floor and goes to sleep.

BUD
God damn you, Clov.

Silence. Bud opens the door and shuts it, but does not leave.

HAMM
Haven't you left yet? I thought you were leaving.

BUD
I have left.

HAMM
Don't forget to call.

Hamm puts the sheet over himself. Bud pauses for a few moments and then exits. Lights dim and after a moment Clov wakes up.

CLOV
I can't bear this place anymore. We need new blood.

HAMM
Maybe the Gods will drop some on our doorstep, Clov.

There is the sound of someone banging on the door. More knocking. Finally the lights brighten and Clov answers the door and invites Bud in.

CLOV
Look, Hamm! The son has fallen out of the sky.

Clov walks towards Hamm and takes the sheet off him.

BUD

I have traveled very far to reach you. Is this the land of my birth?

HAMM

Welcoe, Bud. We've been expecting you. Come closer.

Bud does.

Take me on a journey around the world.

Bud begins pushing Hamm around the world as lights fade to black.

END OF PLAY